







FIRST REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF OFFICERS
OF
SWAMPSCOTT LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
TO THE
SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN,

MARCH 12, 1853.



L Y N N:
W. W. KELLOGG, PRINTER, OVER THE DEPOT,
T Y P O G R A P H I C H A L L.
1853.

*At a town meeting, held Oct. 9, 1852, by adjournment from
the 25th of September, 1852, it was*

Voted, that we accept the proposition made by a gentleman from out of the town, respecting the establishment of a Public Library, and that the selectmen proceed to appoint all suitable officers,—to wit : President, Clerk, Librarian, Collector, and Treasurer, whose duty it shall be to provide a suitable place for the safe keeping of said Library, receive all donations, and report of their proceedings at some future meeting.

In accordance with the vote of town, in town meeting, held October 9th, 1852, the selectmen would appoint, for officers of the Library, the following named gentlemen :

J. B. CLARK, *President.*
H. H. HALL, *Secretary.*
EBENEZER WEEKS, *Treasurer.*
J. L. SEGER, *Collector.*
D. H. MILLETT, *Librarian.*

Signed, SAM'L C. PITMAN, } *Selectmen*
 EBEN. B. PHILLIPS, } *of*
 HENRY J. THING, } *Swampscott.*

A true Copy of Record,

Attest,

J. L. SEGER, TOWN CLERK.

TO THE SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT:—

The undersigned, appointed by you a board of officers of the town library, beg leave to present the following

REPORT.

In entering upon the duties assigned us, we found many questions arising in regard to the plan to be adopted for the government of the library; the rules and regulations for taking out books, and to make provision to replenish the library from year to year; and more than all, how best to interest the greatest number of our fellow citizens in the enterprise, and make it the least objectionable to any, and at the same time to establish it on a firm, permanent and enduring basis.

We had before us many examples of private and social libraries broken up after a few years, although commenced with flattering prospects. But large assessments on the one hand, or the library not well sustained on the other, or from other causes, the shares are forfeited, or sold for a trifle, the stock falls into a few hands, a vote is passed to sell the books, and

the library is broken up. We have similar examples of public libraries sharing the same fate. Appropriations are withheld, the library not well supplied and replenished, the interest of the people dies away, and they too are broken up and scattered.

The plan of taxing all for the benefit of those only who wished to read the books, had strong objections and was not advocated by the board. The plan of asking annual appropriations from the town for replenishing and supplying the library had also many objections. The only one we will mention is, that every year it would necessarily lead to great differences of opinion in regard to the amount to be appropriated, and might be the cause of much unpleasant feeling in our community, which could and ought to be avoided.

A plan was unanimously adopted by the board as the most likely to secure the hearty co-operation of all interested in a library, and at the same time avoid the objections to the other plans. This plan was to have individuals become voluntary members, and pay a small sum annually, so long as they shall remain members, for the purpose of replenishing the library, instead of calling on the town to assess a tax or appropriate money for that purpose, as under this plan none would be required to pay except those who wished to read the books.

This plan does not convey any ownership of the library to the members, only the privilege of reading the books, and of making and altering the rules and regulations of the library as they shall judge best. It provides for any person to take

out books who does not become a member, but only wishes to read a book occasionally. The members have no shares to sell or transfer if they wish to leave ; they simply withdraw and the books remain for those who may wish to join hereafter.

The library is understood to be, and is, a town library, according to the intention of the founder, DR. WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE, of Boston ; who proposed to give the books as a permanent foundation either of a town or social library as should be judged best by the friends of the enterprise to whom the proposal was made ; and we have the most gratifying and substantial evidence of his approval of our plan, in the form of a further donation of one hundred dollars immediately on his being made acquainted with it. But we do not understand that, being a town library, it must necessarily be *free* for all to take books as they choose, any more than the town treasury should be *free* to all to replenish their pockets when they become empty.

We do indeed expect many liberal donations to the library from the friends of learning and education among us ; and having established it on this permanent basis as a town library, we shall undoubtedly receive continual additions ; but we cannot, at present, expect that these contributions will be sufficient to maintain and replenish it without some provision on our part ; and what plan can be adopted more just and liberal than the one proposed ? The library belongs to the town, who appoints its officers ; those who become members, pay for its support and increase, and regulate its affairs ; when they cease

to be members, the library remains still the property of the town for the benefit of others who may wish to avail themselves of its advantages. When, by the enterprise and industry of our citizens, we shall have a new town hall, we hope to have a room appropriated for the library ; and we hope by that time to have a library worthy of such a place.

In giving a history of the library thus far,—only two months having elapsed since it was opened,—we would report that we received, as donations for it its establishment, from Dr. Lawrence, of Boston, 166 volumes; Henry Pike, Esq. of Elmira, 10 volumes; Samuel C. Pitman, ten dollars, with which 10 volumes were purchased; Henry H. Hall, 24 volumes; Rev. J. B. Clark and others, 15 volumes; besides 21 volumes loaned to the library by various individuals of the town,—so that on the 15th of January we opened the library with 246 volumes. Since that time, we have received from Dr. Lawrence a further donation of one hundred dollars, with which we have purchased 110 volumes, some very valuable books. We have also received from Mr. Eben. B. Phillips, a donation of ten dollars, in cash; and from Dr. Reed, 10 volumes; this will make nearly 400 volumes, all of which have been presented. We have, also, a promise of a lot of books from some friends in New York,—35 volumes from one publishing house. Besides, we have, in the treasury, the money paid in by the members, and others.

The first month twenty-nine members joined the association, and there are many more ready to join, on the plan proposed,

so soon as it shall be decided that this plan shall be accepted and adopted ; they have delayed joining entirely on account of the opposition some persons have made to the plan adopted by the Board : and we trust that some of those who *now* object to it will also become members when they more fully understand it, and see its practical operation.

We submit the Constitution and By-Laws, which we have prepared with much labor and care, with the accompanying report, to your candid and impartial judgment. We do not claim that it is perfect, or that it will meet the approbation of *all*; this is too much to expect. If it shall not accomplish the object intended—if any better plan can be devised or proposed—we shall most heartily concur in it.

In conclusion, we would add, to those who do not give us credit for honesty of *purpose and intention*, in our labors, we have no word, of *argument, explanation, or defence*, to offer. And of those who write for the public prints, we make this single request—that their statements may be in accordance with *truth*.

J. B. CLARK, *President.*

HENRY H. HALL, *Secretary.*

EBENEZER WEEKS, *Treasurer.*

JOHN L. SEGER, *Collector.*

DANIEL H. MILLETT, *Librarian.*

Approved and accepted.

SAMUEL C. PITMAN,
EBEN B. PHILLIPS,
HENRY J. THING, } *Selectmen.*

SWAMPSCOTT PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1996 00132 2173

